REMARKS

Claims 1, 5, 8-15 are pending in the above-identified application. Support for new claims 13 is shown in the embodiment of Figure 4 and described in the corresponding portion of the specification. Support for new claims 14 and 15 is provided by the embodiment shown in Figure 7 and described in the corresponding portion of the specification.

Request for Initialed PTO-1449 Form

It is noted that an Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) was filed on February 25, 2003 in order to submit documents cited in European Search Report issues in connection with a corresponding European patent application. It is requested that the Patent Examiner issue an appropriate initialed PTO-1449 in response to this IDS pursuant to MPEP 609.

Allowable Claims 5 and 8-10

The Office Action of December 18, 2002 stated that claims 5 and 7-10 were in allowable form. Claim 5 has been amended so as to be in independent form, and claims 8-10 maintained such that all of these claims depend from claim 5. Consequently, it is submitted that all of claims 5 and 8-10 are in allowable form and should be confirmed as being allowable in the next communication from the Patent Examiner.

Removal of Issues under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 3, 5 and 7-10 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, because of minor typographical errors as described at item (2) on pages 2 of the Office Action. Claims 3 and 7 have been canceled, and remaining claim 5 has been amended so as to remove these errors. It is submitted that all of the presently pending claims comply with all requirements under 35 U.S.C. § 112 such that this rejection should be withdrawn.

Issues under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and 103(a)

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6 and 11 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Tsuda '550 (EP 1 010 550 A2).

Claim 12 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tsuda '550 in view of JP '505 (JP 2-182505) or Rohde '384 (USP 4,765,384).

Claims 1, 3 and 11 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hale '903 (USP 2,236,903) in view of GB '338 (Great Britain Patent No. 460,338) and Tsuda '550.

It is noted that claims 2-4 and 6 have been canceled. Otherwise, it is submitted for the following reasons that the above-noted rejections should be withdrawn.

Distinctions between Present Invention and Tsuda '550

Tsuda '550 is the primary prior art reference relied upon by the Patent Examiner against the present claims. Tsuda '550 discloses a pneumatic tire which includes a circumferential row of shoulder blocks (SB) having axially outer side faces (10) which are convexly curved in a plane parallel to the tread surface. Tsuda '550 more specifically discloses at paragraphs [0022]-[0023] that the axially outer side face (10) is convexly curved in an arc shape (11) which has a single radius (R), and "...the radius (R) increases radially inwards from a minimum Rmin at the block top to a maximum Rmax at the radially inner end of the above-mentioned radial height range," (¶ [0023], lines 19-21). Consequently, the radius "R" has a maximum Rmax at the radially inner end which is a positive value as shown in Figures 2 and 3 of Tsuda '550.

In contrast to Tsuda '550, present claim 1 recites that the radius is infinity at the radially inner end, because the curvature is zero. Tsuda '550 fails to disclose or suggest this feature. Thus, significant patentable distinctions exist between the present invention as recited in claim 1, and the other claims depending from claim 1 which are also rejected.

In addition to the above, it is submitted that JP '505, Rohde '384, Hale '903 and GB '338 all fail to disclose or suggest this feature of the present invention, and are all farther removed from

the present invention than Tsuda '550. Consequently, it is submitted that all of the above-noted rejections should be withdrawn.

It is submitted for the reasons stated above that the present claims define patentable subject matter such that this application should now be placed into condition for allowance.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), Applicant(s) respectfully petition(s) for a two (2) month extension of time for filing a reply in connection with the present application, and the required fee of $410.00 is attached hereto.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the application by this Amendment.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees

required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By _____
Andrew D. Meikle, #32,868

P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000

ADM/csm
0229-0652P

Attachment: Version with Markings to Show Changes Made

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 2-4, 6 and 7 have been canceled.

The claims have been amended as follows:

1. (Amended) A pneumatic tire comprising

a tread portion with a pair of tread edges, and

a tread shoulder extending radially inwardly from one of the tread edges, provided with a curved surface ~~comprising a convex curve~~ consisting of a plurality of convex curves,

said tread portion provided along at least one of the tread edges with blocks each with one of the convex curves,

on a cylindrical surface centered on the tire axis and intersecting said curved surface, each said convex curve swelling axially outwards and having a curvature,

at the tread edge, the convex curve of each said block having a radius of curvature of 1.5 to 4.5 times a circumferential length of the block, and

the curvature gradually diminishing towards the radially inside from the tread edge to a radial distance H from the tread face so that the curvature becomes zero at said radial distance H.

5. (Amended) ~~The~~ A pneumatic tire ~~according to claim 1, wherein~~ comprising

a tread portion with a pair of tread edges, and

a tire shoulder extending radially inwardly from one of the tread edges, provided with a curved surface, wherein

said tread portion is provided along at least one of the tread edges with a circumferential rib with said curved surface,

the curved surface comprises a plurality of ~~said~~ convex curves with a plurality of ~~convex~~ concave curves alternating therewith,

on a cylindrical surface centered on the tire axis and intersecting said curved surface,

each said convex curve swells axially outwards to have a curvature, and each said concave curve caves axially inwards to have a curvature, and the intersecting line between the curved surface and the cylindrical surface is a waved line, and

each of said curvature of the convex curve and said curvature of the concave curve gradually diminishes towards the radially inside from the tread edge.

Claims 13-15 have been added.